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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Merrimack, NH – Monday, July 16, 2015 – The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) awarded the New Hampshire Planners Association's Plan of the Year Award for **The Nashua Region: A Story Worth Telling**.

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is pleased to announce that it was awarded the New Hampshire Planners Association's Plan of the Year Award for [The Nashua Region: A Story Worth Telling](#).

The plan offers valuable tools and insight for local planners as they endeavor to implement their local master plan goals and objectives. Using the NRPC [Regional Plan](#) as a guide, planners and decision makers are afforded the opportunity to step outside the traditional short-term planning process and to focus on implementation opportunities based on real life experiences.

To craft this plan, NRPC used an unorthodox approach and invested time in locations planners don't often get to visit. From the Nashua Soup Kitchen, to the Nashua Police Athletic League after-school program, to the Hollis Veterans Club meetings, staff engaged with residents who traditionally don't have the opportunity to participate in planning processes. The development of the plan also used traditional data gathering techniques resulting in an enormous amount of analysis. From the number of home foreclosures, to the share of residents in or near poverty, to the number of job losses absorbed during the recession – all of those data points can be found in NRPC's regional plan. But statistics can be cold and faceless, and hide the tremendous human impacts these events have on individuals and families. The 'Our Stories' component of the plan provides a unique and more personalized lens in which to view these issues.

The plan tells the story of a family who lost their home to foreclosure and the tremendous impacts that event had on their school-aged children. It tells the story of a young man who endured the shock and uncertainty of losing his job in the depth of the Great Recession. It includes the stories from the founders of a startup frozen food company, including both the excitement of strong initial sales and the unease brought by rising electricity bills. NRPC has discussed energy costs, senior mobility, home foreclosures and economic trends before in other plans and doubtlessly will again. However, never before has a plan in NH seized the opportunity to explore the very profound and life-changing impacts these issues and events directly have on residents across the region. "This Plan brings data, facts, and local voices together to better inform decision makers and support the planning goals and objectives for the region", said Dave Hennessey, Chairman of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

There are approximately 205,000 people who live in the Nashua Region. NRPC interacted with approximately 1,800 of them in crafting the regional plan through numerous occasions ranging from

workshops to old home days and interviews to online surveys. There are always more people to reach, but NRPC's planning process reached as far into its communities as feasibly possible. It was a privilege to share and integrate these stories in such a way to provide a more complete regional plan worthy of the NH Planners Association Plan of the Year designation.

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